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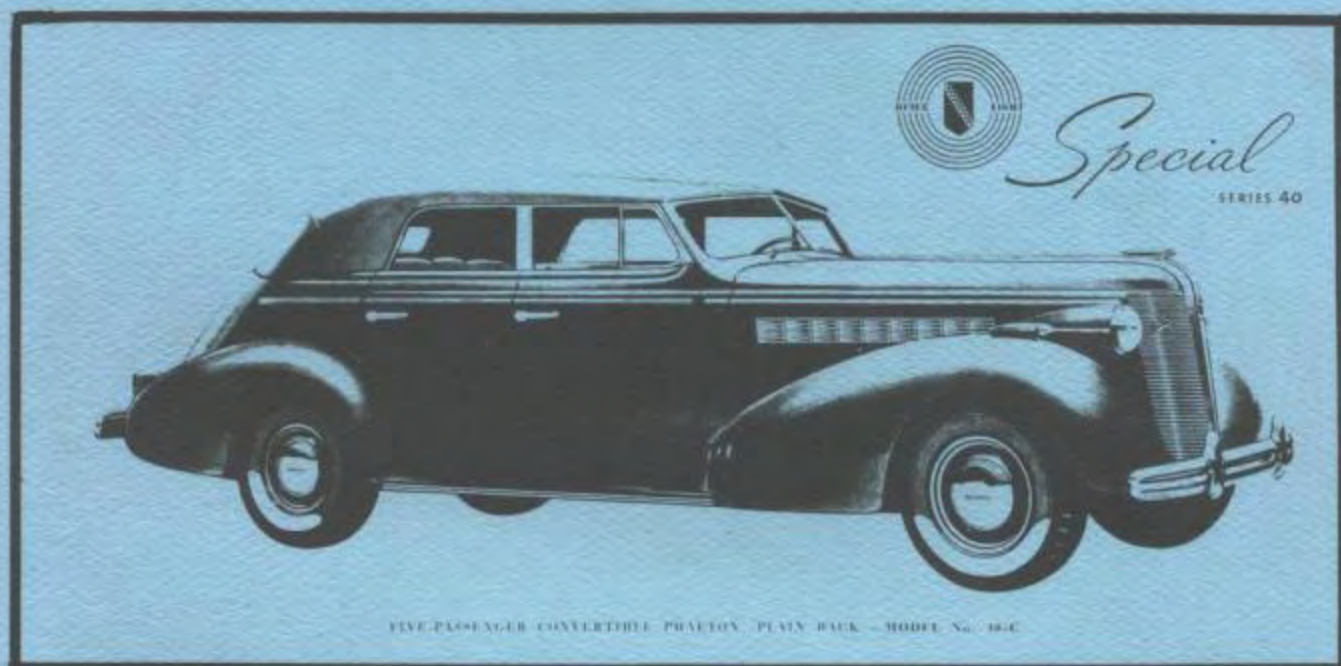
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THE TORQUE•TUBE

THE NEWS PUBLICATION FOR MEMBERS

OF THE 1937-1938 BUICK CLUB • FOUNDED 1980



Volume VI • Number 8



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VOL. VI • JUNE 1988 • NO. 8

• William E. Olson, Editor •

• 842 Mission Hills Lane, Columbus, Ohio 43235 •

● *Club News* ●

QUICK, CHECK YOUR GARBAGE!

Before you read any further:

★ GET THE ENVELOPE THIS ISSUE CAME IN ★
OUT OF YOUR WASTEBASKET

Now, look at the address label. This label sets forth, above your name, your Club Number and the expiration date of your membership. Save the label or write this information down. Stick it on your refrigerator, or paste it in your hat, or tape it on the dashboard of your car. There will be no more forgetting your numbers, no more allowing membership to expire because you can't remember the date. The new-style labels are brought to us by Steve Weinstein's new computer program and printer. The information was transferred by Steve from the old label program, the Roster, and the application forms to the new program, a job of some considerable monotony. A big Thank You to Steve! Most memberships will expire on August 31, 1988. Renewal information will be included in Issue 9. If your label has a mistake on it, please write or call the Editor.

AUSTRALIANA

Recently I received a membership application from our newest overseas member, Geoff Hilliard (#698) in Australia. I've always been fascinated by American place names and their origins, and am discovering that Australian names are no less interesting. Geoff hails from Lower Plenty, Victoria. What about this, Geoff? Is there an Upper Plenty; Middle Plenty? Lower Scarcity; Upper Lack? The mind boggles at such thoughts. Foolish speculations aside, this application was a photocopy of a re-typed version of my standard form.



FOUNDED BY DAVE LEWIS



Someone in Australia has done this and presumably is circulating these forms around the continent. To whomever is doing this, thank you. Elsewhere herein, you will find a brief article on a body style peculiar to "Down Under": the G.M.-Holden "Australian Coupe," an exemplary combination of practicality and 1930's "streamline style." I would love to have one.

May we have more stuff like this, please, Aussies?

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of this Club--such as it may be--will be held in conjunction with the BCA National Meet in Flint. I had a schedule of all the events at the National, but I can't find it. I am not going to postpone writing this to look for it, the chances being good that I will not find it until I am not looking for it. (Follow all that?) Therefore, the Meeting will be held when nothing else official can possibly be going on:

Time: Saturday, July 9; after the BCA Banquet,, or 10:00 P.M., whichever comes first.

Place: Meet in main lobby of Hyatt Regency in Flint; adjourn immediately to somewhere else.

Agenda: Bring up anything you want. The Editor will not make a speech. Clarence Hoffman, if present, will be allowed one joke, not exceeding four minutes in length.

As you know, the Club has no officers, no by-laws, no nothin' like that; therefore, we will need waste no time electing, amending, etc. The Editor may preside or may insist that someone else do so. That member who appears wealthiest will be required to pick up the refreshment check but, if he refuses, the Club may pay it provided no one orders anything exotic. One item I would like to discuss: Two Club meets to be held in 1989, one in Ohio or thereabouts, and one in California or Oregon. Maybe three. The 1987 meet was a big success: we need more of them, and volunteers to organize. Be prepared with specific suggestions.

BACK ISSUES

Copies of all Volume VI issues (Nos. 1-7; Sept. 1987-May 1988) are still available for \$3.00 each, mailed in the U.S.; \$3.25 Canada, or U.S. \$4.75 overseas. In addition, any member who does not have the 1988 Club Roster (which sets forth membership as of December 1987) may have a copy free on request. Please write to the Editor for these.

Paul Culp (#508) has a supply of some issues from earlier periods (i.e., pre-Sept. 1987). The sale of these helps defray the cost of the excellent technical photography Paul does for us. Contact him at R.R. #4 - Box 411, Perkasio, PA 18944.

As you know, our Membership year runs from September 1 to the next August 31. People joining during this period, up to about May 1, receive the issues since the preceding September, and need to renew again in August. However, when someone joins after May 1, my practice is to run his membership to August 31 of the succeeding year, starting it with whatever the next issue may be. (In effect, such persons get a few free issues, but I don't have to explain to them why they need to renew only two or three months after they

began.) This can get too long-winded, so I conclude by saying that those new members who have not received previous Volume VI issues may wish to get 'em while I still have 'em.

POSTSCRIPT ON SIGNAL-SEEKING RADIOS

Charles Jekofsky (#524) has put to flight my foolish speculations concerning the meaning of "ST CAR" on one of the Motorola signal-seeking radio dials (Issue 7, Page 12). Charles, an amateur radio operator, believes this means "Standard Carrier," a term that I gather is well-known to radio experts.

In brief, when this mode was selected, the radio would perform better on weaker signals--i.e., those from low-power or distant sources--than it would on normal setting. Incidentally, Charles also says he has copies of original Motorola literature on car radios, including the signal-seeker. Any member wishing same, may contact him. (Charles Jekofsky, 6307 North Capitol Street, Washington, D.C. 20011. 202/829-0471.

SORRY, NO CHAUCER

Realizing that this is a car club and not a literary tea, the Editor will--for the present--press upon you no more quotes from Medieval Poets. This month's poetry is, rather, brought to us by Charles Jekofsky, who begins an interesting report in the following pages with inspirational lines from that king of homespun, moralistic and inspirational verse (or doggerel), Edgar A. Guest. Members who think they can write stuff as good as Guest--or Chaucer or Shakespeare for that matter--are encouraged to submit their own verses.

Happy motoring! ~ Bill



Obviously not afraid of the dark with six -- count 'em, six -- auxilliary lamps of various kinds, Russell Snyder (#618) brought his '38 Century to an evening meeting of D.C. - area Club members. See next page.



HOW TO ORGANIZE A SUCCESSFUL CLUB CHAPTER

by Charles Jekofsky - Washington, D.C.



Somebody said that it couldn't be done,
But he with a chuckle replied
That "Maybe it couldn't," but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.

- Edgar Albert Guest

For about a year, I had entertained the thought of organizing a meeting of the 1937-1938 Buick Club members residing in the greater Washington, D.C. area. The Club Roster was a wonderfully informative resource that provided the inspiration necessary to initiate this monumental task.

I spoke with the Club President, Editor-in-Chief, and Head Torque-Tuber (is that a correct title??) who encouraged the effort in the hope of breathing a bit more life into a club that primarily exists only by virtue of a terrific periodical. (Editor's Note: A "tuber" is, inter alia, an underground fleshy root: e.g., a potato. I suppose I can respond to that name as well as all the others.) I would venture to estimate that most Club members could pass each other at a meet or flea market (sans their Buicks) and never recognize one another. This does not seem to me enough for an organization that has the potential for greatness. Anyway, Bill Olson praised the concept of scheduling an eyeball meeting (as we ham radio types refer to it). He said that he had once tried to organize a group meeting in Ohio, but had no success.

My first duty was to prepare a listing of members who resided in the greater D.C. area (enlarged to some 90 miles away for one member). I simply photocopied the applicable portions of the Club Roster and began a cut-and-paste operation. I then photocopied a road map of greater D.C. and proceeded to place a red dot at each member's residence. This enabled me to determine an approximate geographic center for establishing a potential meeting site that would be somewhat equidistant for the farthest members. A total of 14 members were identified.

Next, I contacted each of the 14 members personally by telephone and proposed the concept of the chapter meetings. Everyone I spoke with was enthusiastic about the idea and was anxious to attend. About three weeks intervened until a suitable meeting place could be selected. I phoned each member again and revealed the location, date and time. The location turned out to be a popular family restaurant, well known by all, called Hot Shoppes, with a reputation for good food at a reasonable price.

Members were asked to bring photographs of their Buick(s) and a listing of resource materials (publications, etc.) that would be consulted for reference. Their precious automobiles were discouraged, as the meeting would be held at night, indoors, and would not be judged anyway.

Finally, Saturday, April 16th arrived, and it was almost 6 P.M. when I arrived. Karl Anderson and his lovely wife had already preceded me. Steadily, other members drifted in. I became increasingly anxious as each new arrival appeared. Though only half of the invitees showed up, it was interesting to note that the most distant members comprised the bulk of those present.

The next three hours were, to put it mildly, fascinating. Time really flew! We ate supper, yakked, and really got to know one another. Certain members previously knew certain others on an individual basis, but none had met as many as were present that evening.

I handed out name tags (pressure sensitive white labels with photocopies of the Club logo attached) to facilitate recognition. I also passed out relevant photocopies of Buick literature, including tune-up and lubrication guides, reference data, electrical system schematic diagrams, etc., for the owners' applicable years and models. These "perks" were provided in order to stimulate the sharing concept, which was favored by all. We tend to desire existing more as a support group rather than a formal group with officers, by-laws, dues, and a newsletter. The support group style of organization gives members a higher degree of visibility and encourages more participation than the formal group.

For the purposes of the first meeting, I prepared an agenda to assist in dealing with some issues that required discussion. First, we had to determine the circumstances surrounding future meetings. We agreed to three per year, excluding the cold winter months. The next would be on June 26th, a Sunday afternoon. It will be hosted by Karl Anderson and his wife, Dorothy, at their home in Berryville, Virginia.

Stuart Rein brought a set of trunk hinges that he first cast out of brass ("not the usual pot metal" as he emphasized) and later had chrome plated. They looked very impressive, but did not meet his standards of excellence. He plans to cast a Mark II version which should be even better!

We talked about various aspects of becoming interested in the old Buicks, how each member's vehicle was acquired, existing problems, innovative solutions to problems (such as David Bylsma's method of installing a "hidden" oil filter), parts needs, and parts availabilities.

We also discussed opening the group to other '37-'38 Buick owners not presently affiliated with the Club, in the hope that they may be encouraged to link up. This was generally seen as a positive move that would add additional expertise and resources. While our support group chapter is not being founded as a competitor with the local BCA organization, members generally agreed that the BCA Chapters in this area appear to be dominated by "muscle-car" enthusiasts who are not interested in pre-war iron.

We see our humble beginning as the start of the proverbial journey of 1,000 miles that has taken the first step. Many thanked me afterwards for organizing this initial event. But, while accepting their thanks, I responded by stating that I am only a catalyst. The members are the ones that make things like this happen. I can personally say that I have not met as many kind-hearted people, eager to assist one another, as I met that Saturday evening. My only hope is that the Chapter continues to grow and prosper. Any suggestions by other Club members that would be helpful to us are certainly welcome.

Before departing, I took a group photograph to commemorate our first meeting. I hope our decision to organize will serve as an incentive for other Chapters to form too. That would lead to annual meets, as a minimum, and improved assistance for those members or potential members who feel "left out" of the mainstream.



D.C.-area members attending the first meeting are (L to R): Seated--Conrad Burnett, Stuart Rein, David Bylsma, Karl Anderson. Standing--Stephen Thomas, Rusty Snyder, Russell Snyder, Hugh Rein and Charles Jekofsky.

I cannot applaud too strongly the efforts of Charles Jekofsky in organizing our "National Capital Chapter." (I hesitate to say it's our first chapter since I suspect one has existed on an ad hoc basis for some time in Oregon.) His article shows that all it takes is one person willing to put in a few hours to get things moving. OK, all you people in California, New York, Michigan, etc., etc., etc.---how about it? Let's see more of this!

Bill

PATCHES

Very nice cloth patches of the Club logo in red, white and blue--approximately 4" x 2-3/4"--are available from:

Keith Ladderud (#163)
21708 SE 291 St.
Kent, WA 98042

Price: \$5.00 each; 2 for \$9.00; 3 for \$12.00. Once Keith has recovered his investment, further proceeds will go to the Club.

AUSTRALIA ~ 2



"the sloper"

This is the second of our articles marking the Australian Bicentennial. It is adapted from material sent to me by a gentleman in Australia--his name has temporarily escaped me--who's not even a member of the Club. I found the story and photos fascinating, especially since I previously knew nothing about the Australian All-enclosed Coupe, sometimes called the "Sloper," and since the car is so typical of 1930's "streamline style." (Sorry the photos are not better but, of course, I must use what I get.)

As most of you know, General Motors has produced cars in Australia since the 1920's. In 1931, through a merger of General Motors Australia and Holden Motor Body Builders, Ltd., the enterprise became known as General Motors-Holden's, Ltd. ("GMH"). An all-Australian car was not produced until after World War II. In the 1930's, GMH imported U.S.-made chassis and cowl units and put Holden bodies on them. In the case of 1937 and 1938 Buicks, only 40- and 60-series cars were sold in Australia. A Buick or Pontiac four-door sedan with a Holden body exhibits numerous variations from the U.S. product, but overall the cars do not look a lot different. The "Sloper," however, was unique.

We begin this story with a reprint from General Motors-Holden's publication of 1936 titled The Changing Trend.

ORIGINALITY . . . FOR AUSTRALIA'S SAKE

In this country of far-flung spaces, where conditions range from humid to arid, from Tropical and Temperate to near-Arctic in certain mountain districts, and from the tarred or concrete highway to the virgin tracks of the sedimentary country of the hinterland, the standards of usage are complex and exacting. Nowhere else in the world are so many problems presented to the car body designer and builder. Bodies built overseas for use here will stand up to conditions for a certain period but are never completely up to the Australian standard of requirement--because they were produced in countries where the product does not have to meet such arduous conditions as those existing in Australia. It was natural that Australia should be compelled to take its place in the ranks of body builders in order to produce bodies built for specifically local conditions--strong to stand hard usage, beautiful in line, luxurious in comfort, perfect in finish--and of course safe.

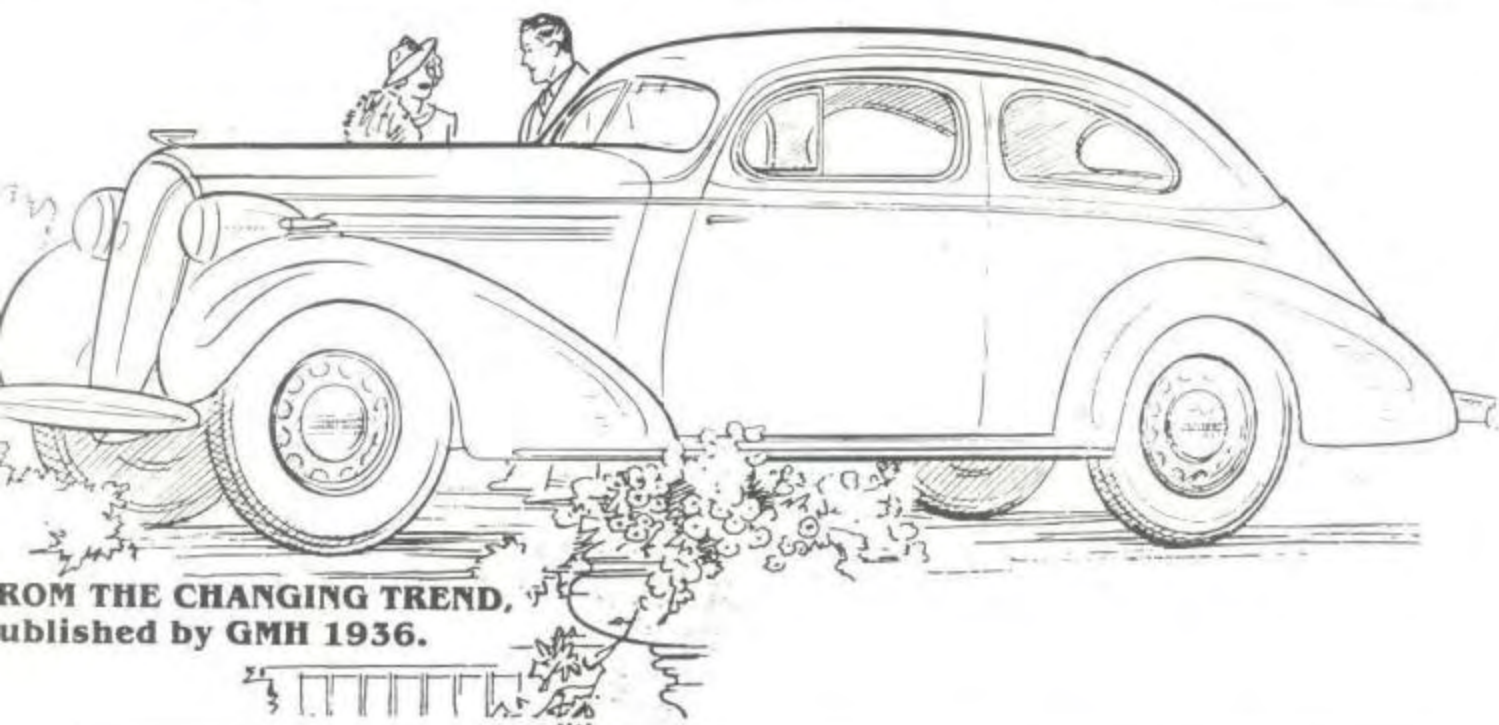
Naturally enough, body designs at first were copied from plans sent from overseas, but as the Australian technicians acquired complete mastery of their craft, they claimed, secured and justified their right to follow their own initiative. Designs are no longer merely copied at Woodville. That stage has passed into the limbo of discarded dies and patterns.

This applies to every car body produced by Woodville, but Woodville's masterpiece of originality to date is the Australian All-Enclosed Coupe, which was first produced for 1935 models in Australia. Its appearance, with the beautiful streamlining of the roof and rear, is now familiar to nearly every Australian, and the advantages of its interior arrangements are already extensively known to Australian car purchasers.

This coupe was completely evolved by the designing section at Woodville. First the model was roughly drawn, altered, and re-drawn many times. Finally it reached the plasticine model stage and the exterior design was approved. But the interior called for something special.

The rear seat, which provides comfortable enclosed accommodation for three people, can, by an ingenious arrangement, be folded in such a manner as to disappear and leave very large luggage space in its stead. On placing the hand at the rear of the rear seat and pulling upwards, the seat comes forward close to the rear of the front seat and stands there vertically, and in the same operation the rear squab comes down flat on its face, firmly held there by wing supports, with its back forming a level floor continuous with the floor of the rear luggage compartment.

This provides a total luggage space capable of carrying eight to ten hundred-weight of luggage and materials. This is a really Australian car, suitable as a sedan for the city or country, yet instantly convertible into a utility vehicle while still preserving the external appearance of a smart car for general use.



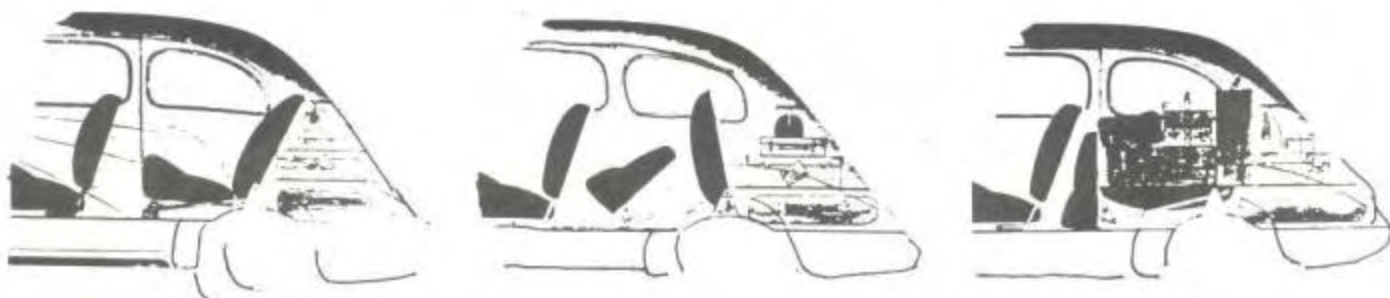
FROM THE CHANGING TREND,
published by GMH 1936.

The All-Enclosed Coupe was Holden's response to market competition in the "sport coupe" line. The designers were given the task of building a vehicle that would provide cover for passengers theretofore carried in rumble or "dickie" seats, would have the utility needed for Australia's varied and difficult conditions, and would at the same time exhibit some "style." it seems to me they succeeded very well. For obvious reasons, the car came to be called--informally-- the "Sloper."

The first Sloper was put on the Olds 6-cylinder chassis, and was shown at the Sydney Easter Show in early 1935. Initially, one body was used for Chevrolet, a second for Olds and Pontiac Sixes, and a third for 8-cylinder Pontiac, Olds and Buick cars. The all-steel body-forming technology introduced in 1936 gave Holden the opportunity to improve styling of the 1937 models. In its early form the coupe had a one-piece rear window that tilted out; in 1936 this was replaced by two fixed lights. For 1937, the strength of the all steel body allowed a larger rear window area. The deck ("boot") lid, formerly in one piece, was shortened and a separate door added for the spare tire compartment.

(Yes, Sidemount Fever suffers, there were a few Buick coupes made with fender-mounted spares.) The major appearance change in 1937 models was the replacement of the thick upright center pillar with a much thinner one which sloped rearward. The window frames curved along their upper edge following the roof line and were outlined with stainless frames. Two bodies only were made in 1937-1941: Chevrolet, Pontiac and Olds Six; and Buick, Olds and Pontiac Eight. Chevrolet offered a "commercial" coupe with no rear seat.

Aside from the styling, the most interesting feature of the Enclosed Coupe was the folding rear seat. The bench could be tilted forward to a vertical position and the seat back then forward to lie flat, its back side forming a continuous floor with the trunk (like a station wagon.) This allowed a large amount of luggage or equipment to be carried. Alternatively, two people of average size could bed down, putting their gear in the front seat for the night--or a travelling salesman could sleep with his samples if no farm house was at hand. Distances in Australia are great, and in those days hotels were few and far between.



Buick chasses were first fitted with these bodies in 1936, and the style continued with Buick through the 1938 model year. Only 325 were built in all, and they provided the most speed and luxury--at least in the Century version--of the five makes using the Sloper body. (Vauxhall--also produced by G.M.H.--had one in '38 and '39.) In 1936, the smaller Buick (118" w.b.; 93 hp) was called "Roadmaster" but in 1937 and '38 the Special and Century names were used.

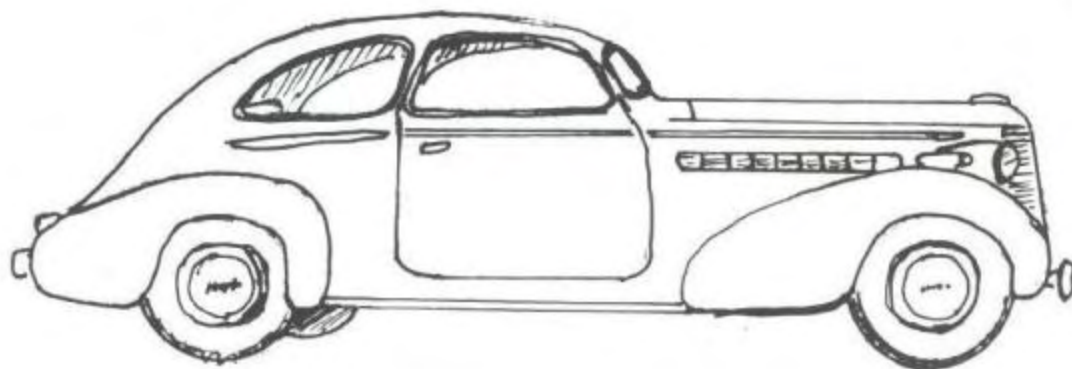
Of course, the most striking aspect is the styling. The car is reminiscent of, but different from, all other examples of 1930's "streamline style." Oddly, perhaps the closest thing is the '34 Cadillac V-16 Fleetwood Coupe, based on a sensational 1933 show car. Holden did not copy the Caddy, however, as they were unaware of it. There were only about 6,500 Slopers built under all marques from 1935-41. Not many have survived, but fortunately, as the photos indicate, they are still being discovered and restored.



Nearest U.S. Buick to the "Sloper" style was the "plain-back" two-door.



1938 Buick and Pontiac & both used 1937 Buick tail lamps.



1937 Holden - Buick Century coupe (traced from photocopy of magazine page). Compare with U.S. two-door "sport" sedan on preceding page.

BUICK



TECHNICAL TIPS



ADDING A MODERN OIL FILTER

by David Bylsma (#117)

In the past I have met several people who wanted an oil filter on their '37 or '38 Buick for one reason or another. One reason is to filter the oil to the rocker arms, so that the passage way to the rocker arms will not get sludge in it. If that happens the rocker arms will wear out. Another reason is just to ease your mind. You know an engine should have an oil filter, so what can you do about it?

I put hydraulic lifters out of a '51 Buick engine into my '38 Buick engine. So I thought I would use the oil filter from the '51 Buick engine. I cleaned it up, painted it, and mounted it on to my '38 Buick engine. However, I was not satisfied with this: It was hard to find an insert for it; it was a royal pain and a mess to change the filter; and it was ugly. Every time I opened the hood, my eyes went to it. It stood out like a sore thumb. It just looked out of place.

So I started looking for something else. In the J. C. Whitney catalog I found an "Oil Filter Relocation Kit" for cars that take a spin-on type filter. So I ordered a relocation kit. You have to tell them what type car and engine you have. Since you can't give them your '38 Buick name, if you like the filter on your new car, give them the information on your new car. It will not matter what information you give them, because they will tell you what filter will fit it. I went with 8-cylinder engine information because I was putting it on an 8-cylinder engine.

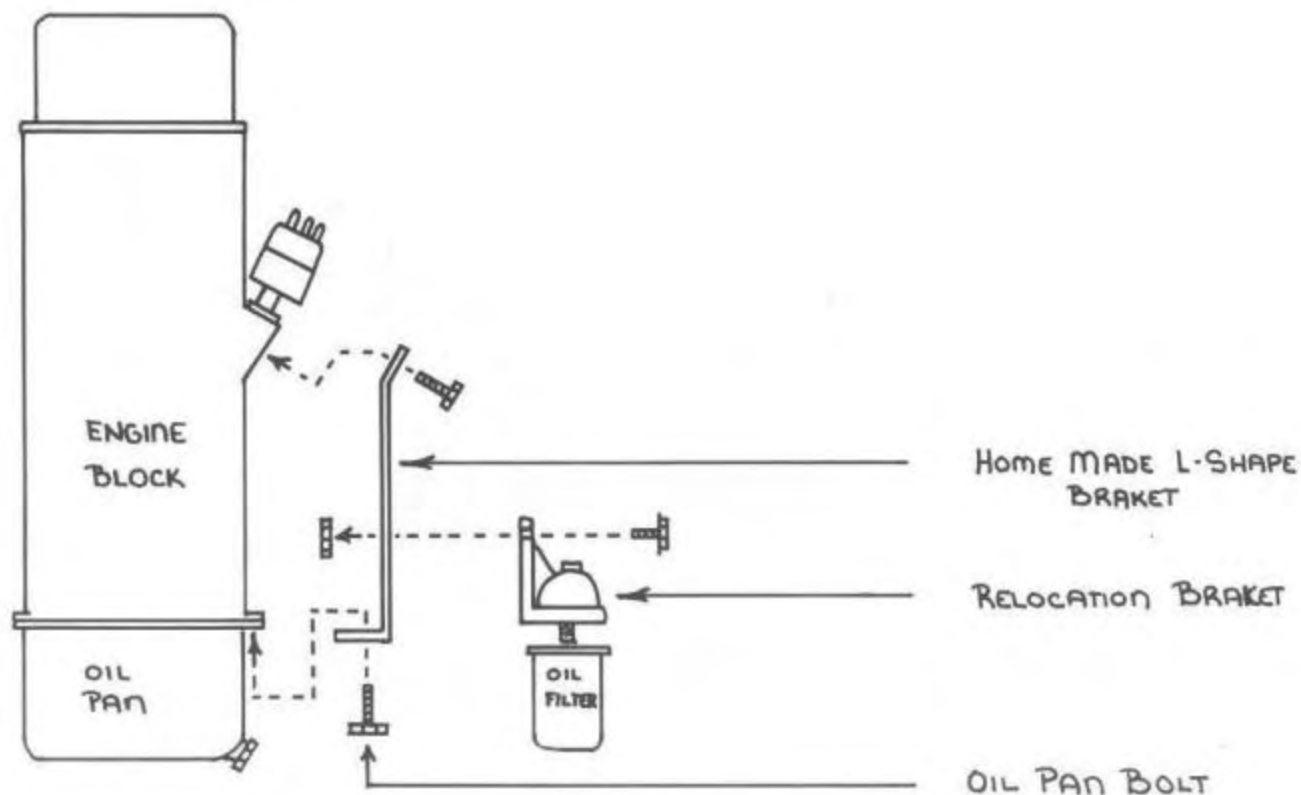
The kit came with an oil filter adapter and two hoses to run from the adapter to a relocation bracket. You take the oil filter off your new car engine and screw the oil filter adapter onto the engine in the oil filter's place. Mount the relocation bracket to the engine or frame, so the filter is easy to get to, then put the hoses on, connecting the adapter to the relocation bracket. Now you can screw the oil filter into the relocation bracket and the filter is easier to get to.

That is what you get, and how to do it to a new car, but you want to put it on a '37 or '38 Buick. Here's what I did; I made an L-shaped bracket, bolted the L-shaped bracket to the two oil pan bolts right above the oil pan drain plug, then the top of the L-shaped bracket I bolted to the engine using the bolt just below the distributor. (Some engines do not have a bolt below the distributor). After the L-shaped bracket was bolted to the engine, I bolted the relocation bracket (from the oil filter relocation kit) to the L-shaped bracket, which is now on the engine. Once the relocation bracket is in place, you will have to run an oil line from the engine to the relocation bracket. I took the oil line at the front of the engine off, that runs from the engine block to the hole in the head that feeds the oil to the rocker arms. I then ran an oil line from the engine block to the "in" hole on the relocation

bracket. Then I ran an oil line from the relocation bracket "out" hole to the hole in the head where the oil goes to the rocker arms. Once all of that is completed you can put a spin-on oil filter on and it is ready to go. After I had the filter in place I could not put the splash pan back on, but I did not care. The oil filter is down out of the way, out of sight, and best of all, I can go to any parts store and get a replacement oil filter for it.

You do not have to put the filter where I did. It can be mounted anywhere. You can mount it somewhere else so you can still put your splash pan on. It is all left up to your imagination.

I hope I have helped someone out with this bit of information.



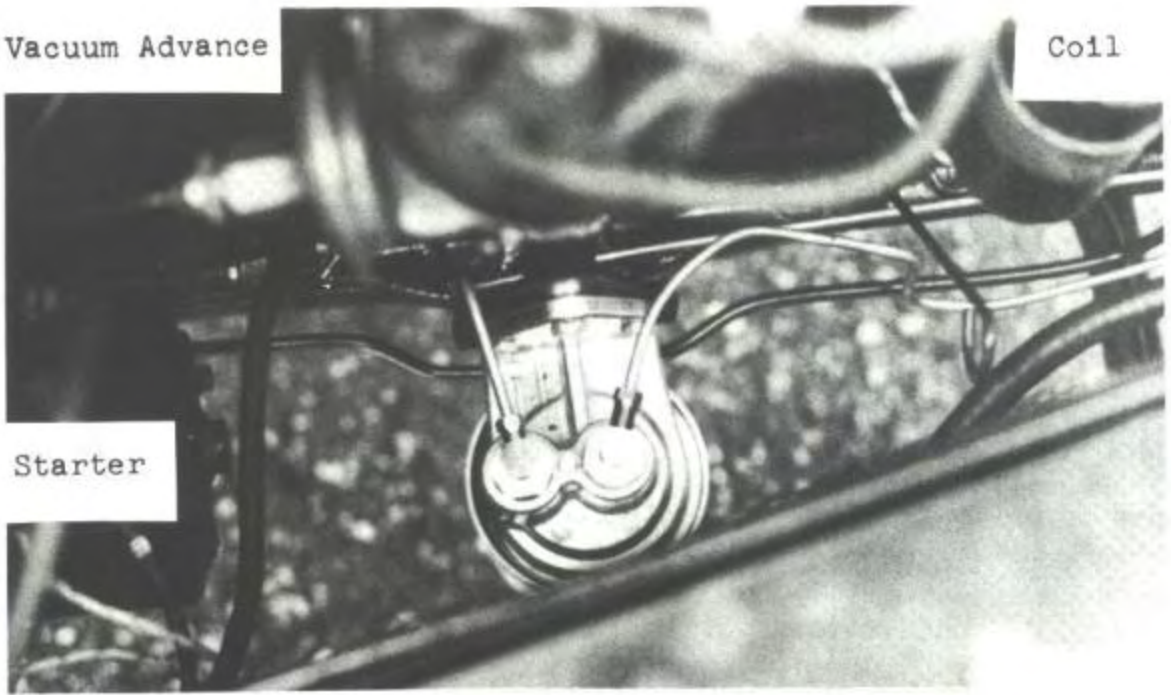
(CONTINUED)



Vacuum Advance

Coil

Starter



Starter



Engine Rebuilding~Part 4

Block & Crankshaft

In this part of his engine rebuild chronicle, Paul Culp talks about reconditioning his block and crankshaft: re-bore, grinding and balancing. This could be a whole book in itself, or covered in a brief sketch, or maybe something in between. Since a whole book is obviously out of the question, and since most of the work must be done by a machine shop in any event, we have opted for the brief sketch, with a dollop of mechanical engineering thrown in. Nevertheless, I think this will be informative. It was for me.

ARTICLE & PHOTOS BY PAUL B. CULP

The Buick cylinder block crankcase is described as a single integral unit made of a ferrous alloy, with eight cast-in cylinder bores, completely surrounded by cooling water jackets. The small series blocks are nearly the same for '37 and '38, only the generator mounting bosses and oil stick holes being slightly different. The large series for '36, '37 and '38 share the same block, again with minor differences.

The block is, of course, the foundation of the engine, enclosing the cylinder bores in which the pistons move. As the cylinder bores wear, they become tapered and develop a "ridge" at the top. Eventually the tapered wear becomes too great to adequately contain combustion and prevent oil from being drawn into the combustion chamber and the pistons start "slapping." This is corrected by re-boring: that is, increasing the cylinder diameter to a point at which perfect roundness, uniform throughout the length of the bore, can be achieved. Once this is done, of course, oversize pistons must be fitted. All engine blocks are designed with enough metal in them to permit re-bores up to a certain maximum. How far to go in a re-bore is a function of (1) the amount of wear present; and (2) the diameter of oversize pistons available. In my case, it was necessary to bore the block for .060 oversize pistons, even though that was more than enough to remove all the wear, because these were the pistons I could get.

In measuring cylinders for wear, it is important to measure at no less than six levels throughout the length of the bore, and to take at least two diameters at right angles to each other at each level. I had the tools to do this myself, but the machine shop you choose can do it.

Before trucking my block to the machine shop, I removed the end plugs to the oil gallery, along with the side plugs. The only parts attached to the basic block were the five main bearing caps.

The first operation was cleaning the block. We avoided the "hot tank" because that would have destroyed the babbitt-metal cam shaft bearings. (These bearings are in the block, and I decided not to remove them because they were within specification. If they had required replacement, it would have been

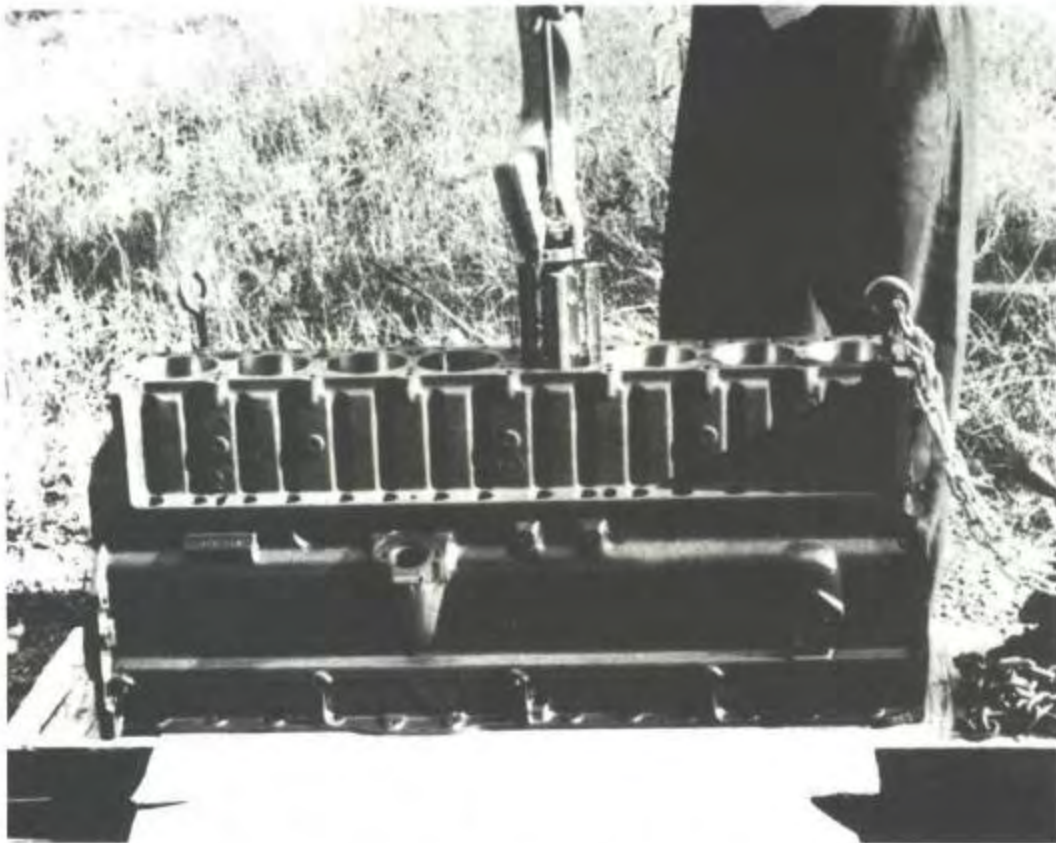
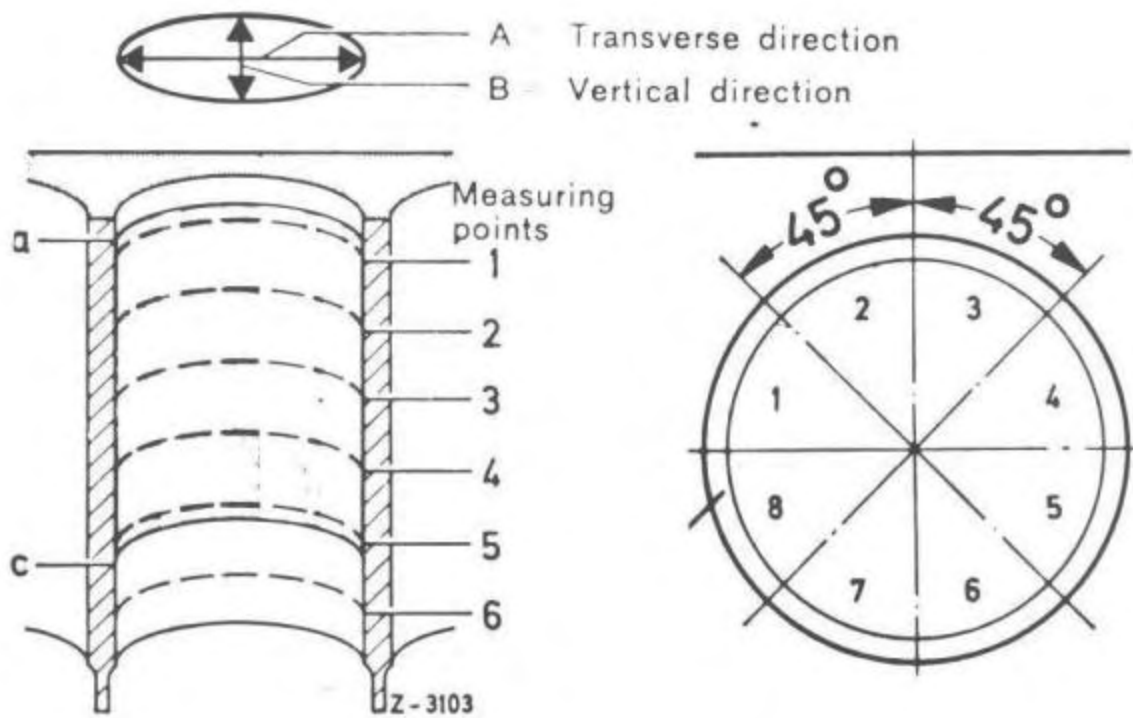
necessary to line-bore them since they are not a precision-type bearing.) Once the "gunk-type" cleaning was complete, the next operation was to check the integrity of the block by "magna-fluxing." This technique detects cracks through use of a magnetic field. Upon the successful passing of this test, it was time for the re-bore.

The machine shop requires the new pistons before they will set up for the bore and hone procedures. Once set up, this work moves very smoothly. Boring oversize cylinders is a standard procedure. Final honing is also a fundamental operation. The cross-hatch pattern that is created by the stones used is essential for proper break-in of your new rings.

Here again, I drew on the knowledge and experience of Bob Pipkin. A "Technical Tip" sent in by Bob a few years ago (Vol. III, No. 5, p. 11) says: "One thing most machine shops do when they rebuild a Buick Straight-8 is set the pistons up too tight." Bob recommends that, when after-market pistons are used (as distinguished from Buick originals), the original specified piston-cylinder clearance of .0008 to .0018 be increased to .004 to obviate cylinder wall scoring. (The problem is in the different metallurgy used in after-market pistons and their different expansion rate.) This recommendation was applied in the honing operation. The shop was a bit dubious, but I gave them a copy of the Torque Tube page mentioned above and insisted that this was exactly what I wanted. Each piston was measured and fitted individually and numbered sequentially. All of this was done for about \$125.



Measuring piston-cylinder wall clearance.



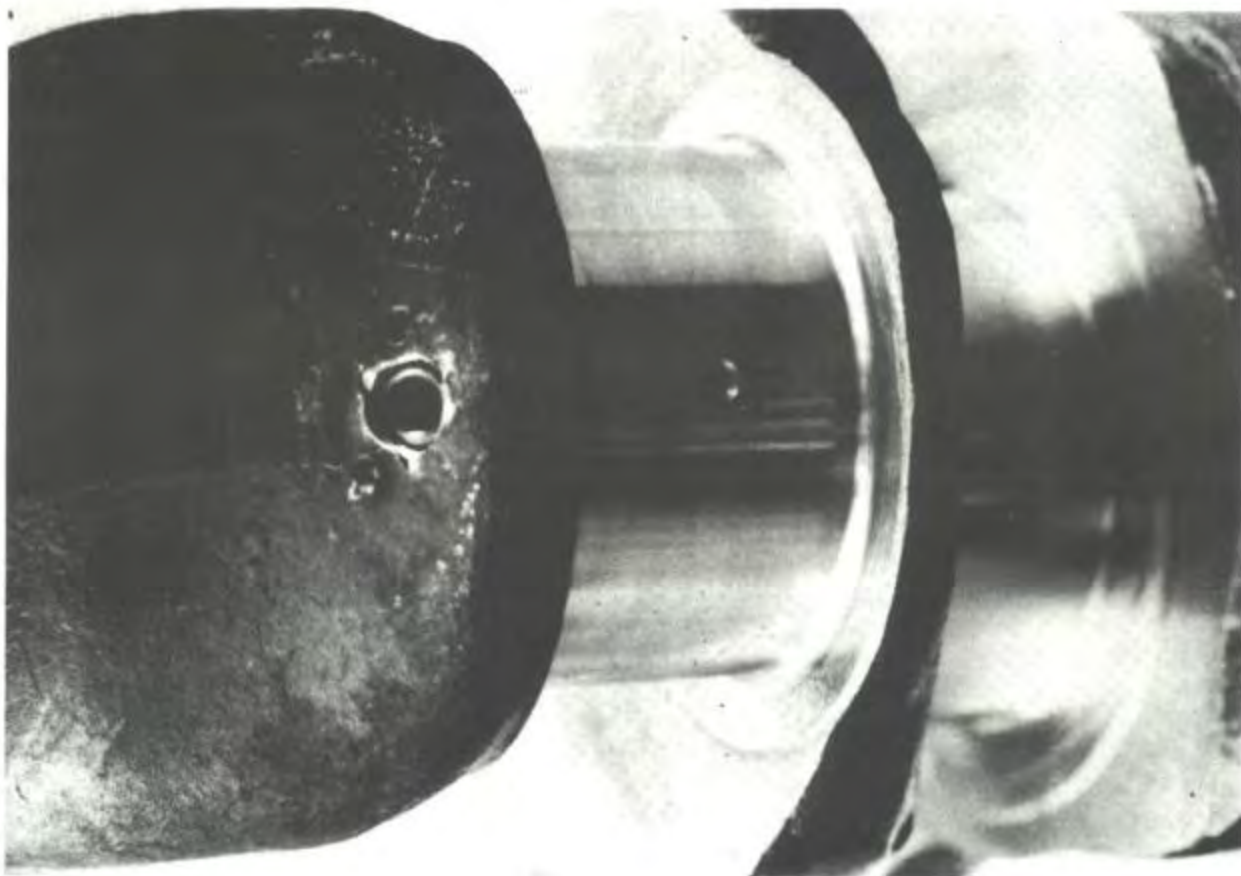
Author demonstrates cylinder hone used by machine shop.

While work on the block was going on, I turned my attention to the crankshaft. I guess we all know that the crank is one of the oldest and--in its basic form--simplest of machines; it converts reciprocating motion to rotary motion. The Buick crankshaft is forged steel, counterweighted, with five main bearing surfaces ("journals") stepped in size from front to rear. The '37 and '38 small series are not interchangeable, whereas the large series crankshaft can be used in either year.

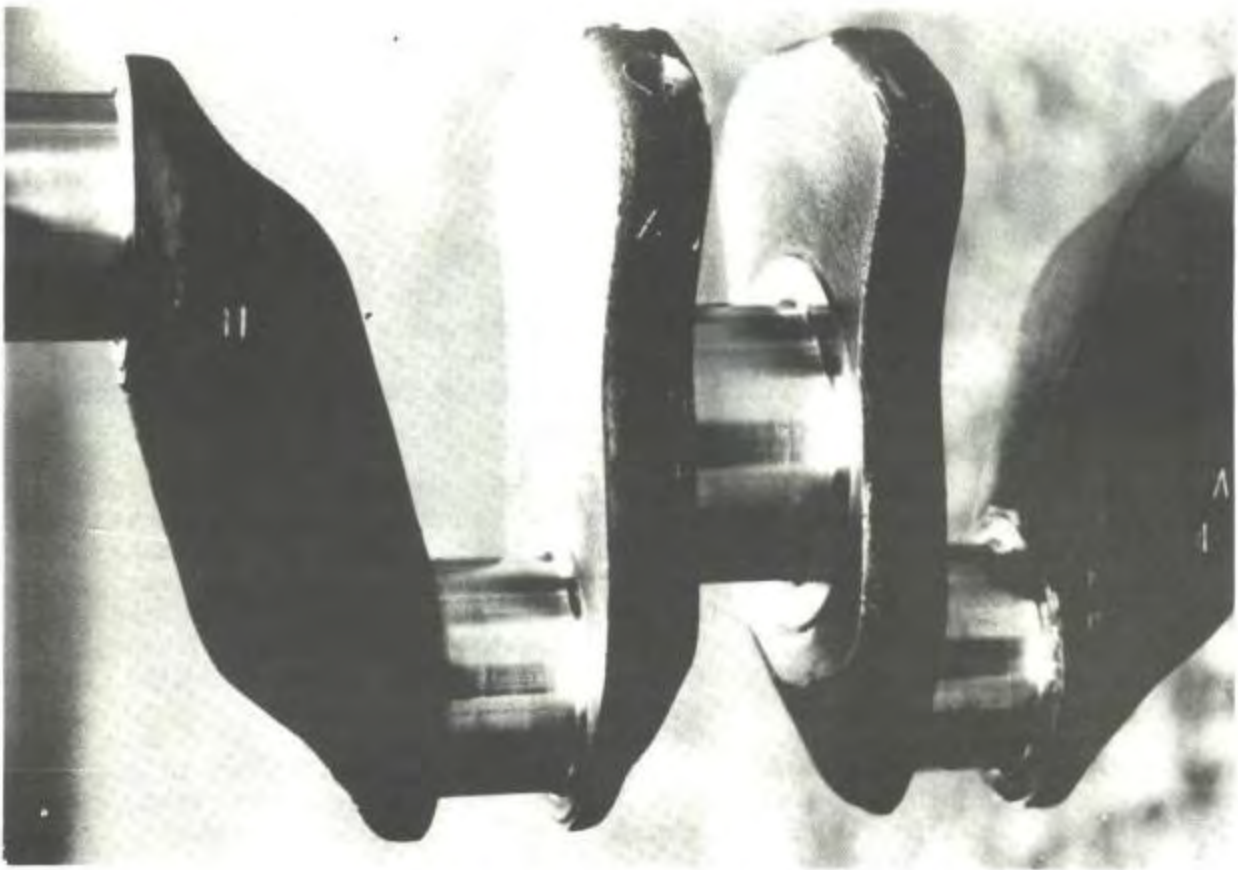
The crankshaft is balanced both statically and dynamically. An integral part of the crank is the torsion balancer at the front end; this is a miniature flywheel made of laminated steel discs that absorbs the winding and unwinding resulting from the application and release of power impulses. At the back end of the crank is the flywheel.

I decided to have the bearing journal surfaces reground to .010 undersize, since they had worn slightly out of round. This too was a standard machine shop procedure. It was fascinating to watch. After a "hot tank" bath and magna-flux test, the crank (all 42 inches and 116 pounds of it) was put in a lathe and rotated against a two-foot fluid-cooled grinding wheel. Make sure--especially if you are changing to different bearings--that all your final specifications for bearings and journal surfaces match. You should also check journal surface end-play at this stage. Mine was OK.

The next operation was to remove and replace all the oil plugs. Oil holes are drilled into the crank at the time of manufacture. In time, these may become clogged with sludge and should be drilled out and cleaned.



Close-up showing crank journal oil holes.



Close-up of center main bearing journal.

The last step was balancing. A well-balanced engine must eliminate or minimize several types of vibration. All three major components--flywheel, crank and torsion balancer--are balanced independently. Small holes are drilled in the flywheel and balancer, while on the crank, metal is ground off the throws. As indicated above, balancing is both static and dynamic.

In static balancing the part is laid on "ways"--flat bars which are precisely level. If the part tends to roll, it is out of balance. However, a unit in perfect static balance may not be in correct dynamic balance: that is, the weight of all parts or sections of the unit may not be distributed evenly along its centerline. When a shaft is not balanced dynamically, it will wobble endwise, setting up destructive vibrations.

Bringing reciprocating and rotating parts into perfect balance is not a simple problem. The weight of pistons and connecting rods, moving one way and then the other, produces considerable vibration. The shaft is subjected to shocks in bringing these parts to a stop at the end of each stroke. These shocks are called "primary inertia forces." (Fortunately, we need not worry about "secondary inertia forces"; these are common in four-cylinder engines where the center of gravity of the pistons and rods keeps shifting off the centerline. This is a function of the four strokes of a "four-cycle" engine: the total weight of rods and pistons must be moved up and down during each half-revolution, and the vibration has a frequency of twice the engine speed.)

Every crankshaft has an inherent natural period of frequency of vibration, often referred to as "sympathetic vibration." If the natural period of vibration should correspond with the torsional vibration (winding and unwinding) the crank would break. The Buick engine, because of its relatively long crank and high relative RPM, depends on the torsional vibration damper, described earlier, to neutralize torsional crankshaft vibration. The motion of the torsion balancer (sometimes called harmonic balancer) is exactly out of phase with or opposite to that of the crankshaft.



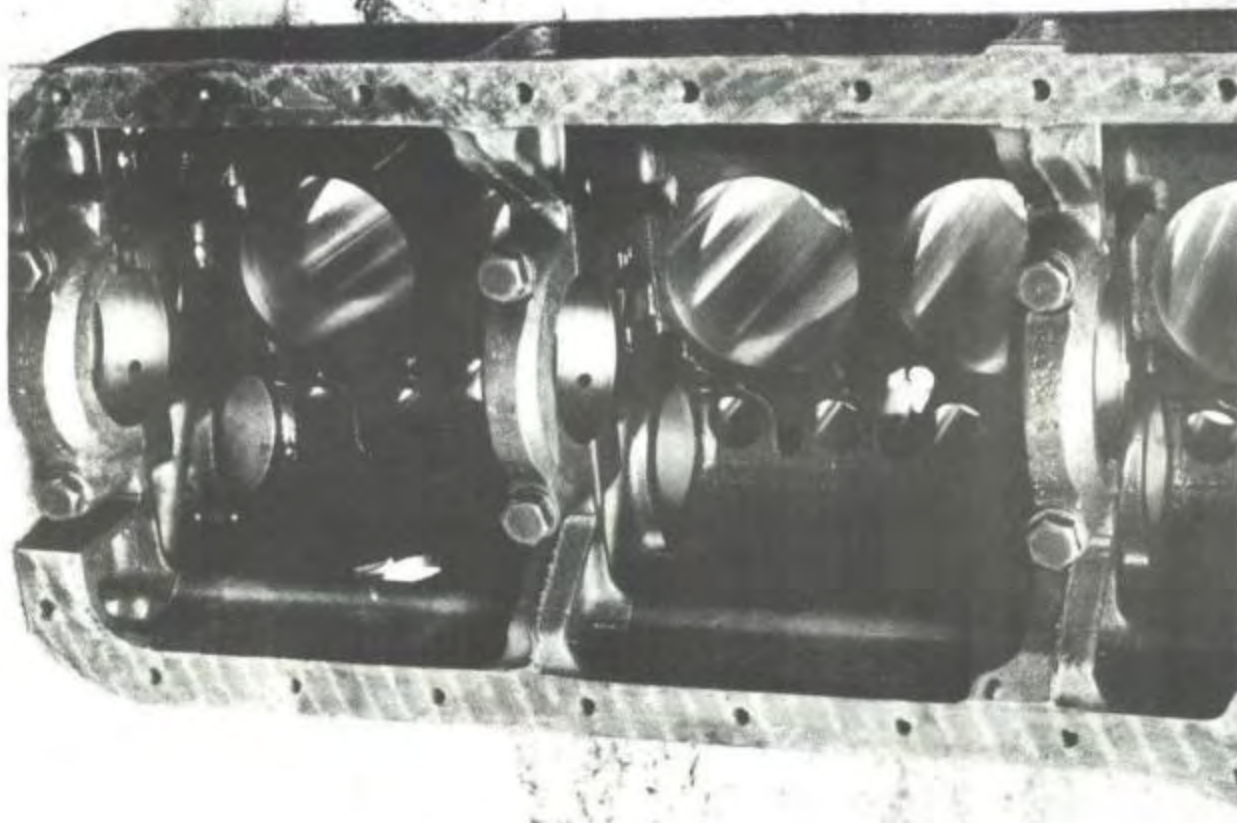
The straight-eight engine receives its power impulse at every 90-degree movement of the crankshaft. Thus, unlike the four, six, or V-Eight, it is inherently in correct balance. A good machine shop can orchestrate all its parts into heavenly harmonies. As noted above, the Buick engine was balanced statically and dynamically at the time of manufacture. However, with today's technology we can improve things.

The final step was precision balancing. This considers the crankshaft, balancer, flywheel, pressure plate, rods and pistons--one integral mass. Each piston and rod is weighed and balanced so that each unit is equal. After each piece is balanced, the whole is balanced, and at \$125 it was worth it. A precision-balanced engine is a smooth-running joy.

After all this machine shop work things still weren't ready for putting together. Grinding dust was removed from the crankshaft by first spraying with kerosine, then washing with detergent and rinsing. Likewise, the cylinder bores were cleaned first with kerosine. Then each bore was scrubbed thoroughly

with detergent. This lifts microscopic grit out. I cannot stress enough this essential step: Your bores must pass a "white glove" inspection.

Having previously cleaned the valve and push rod covers, I primed and painted them and the block--this should be done as soon after final cleaning as possible. It was fun to see that nice shade of "engine green" go on; things would soon be going back together.



Finished block: looks almost too nice to use.





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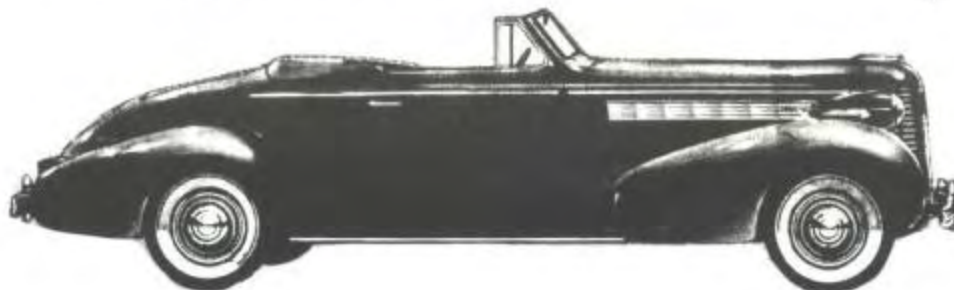
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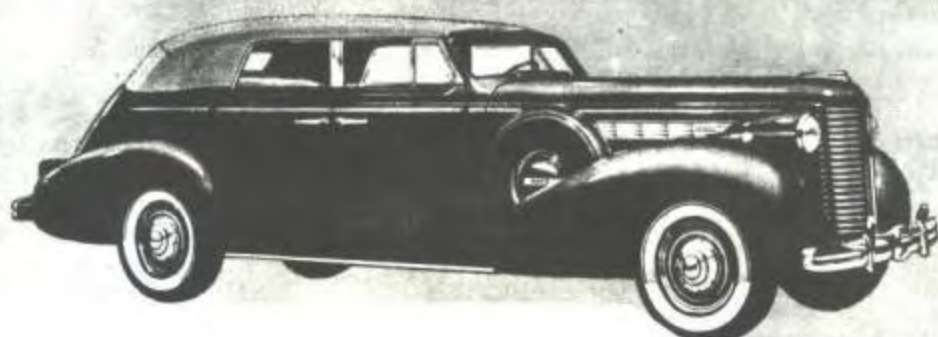
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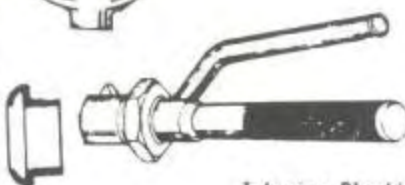
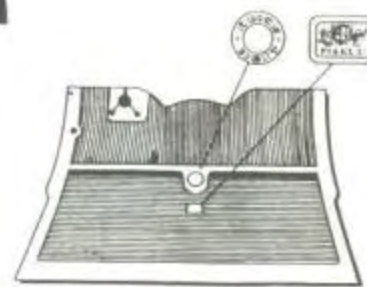
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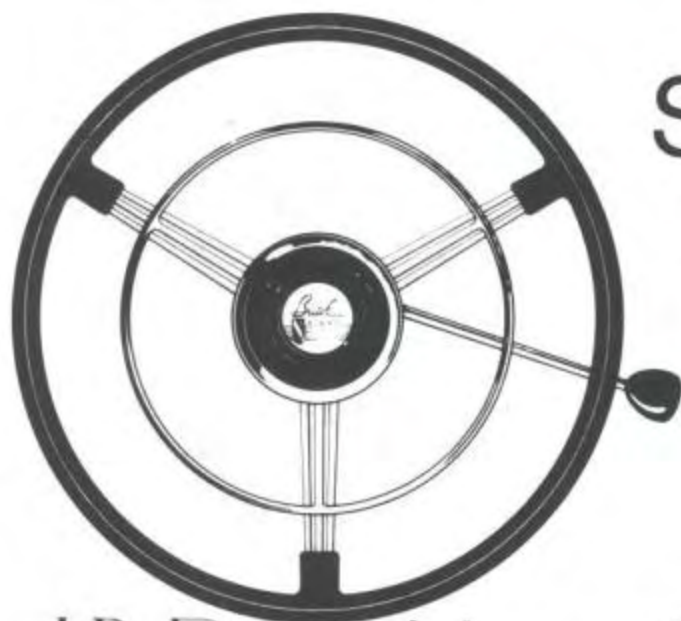
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